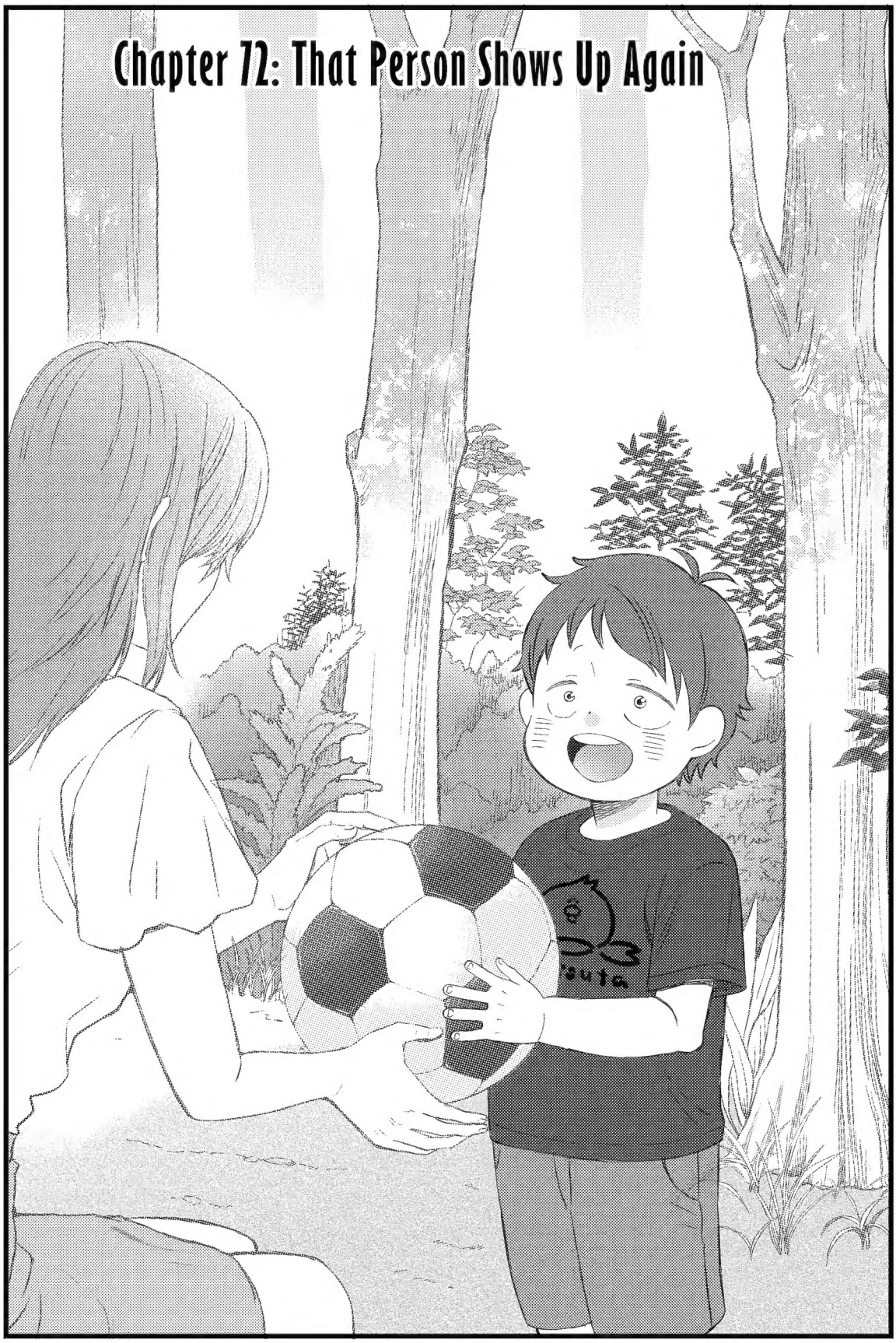
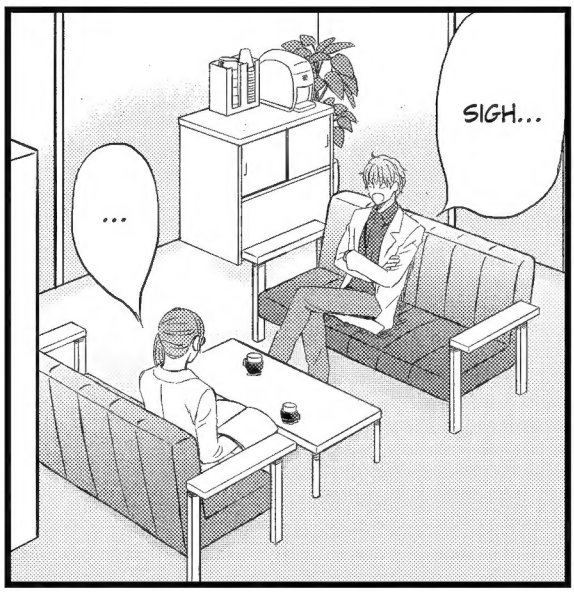
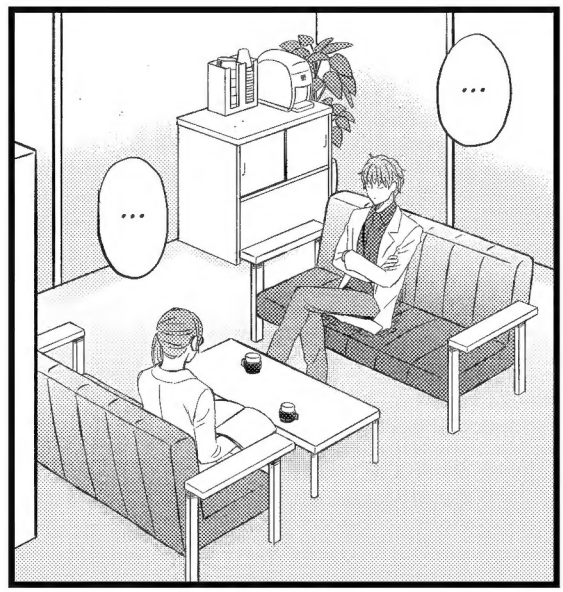
Chapter 72: That Person Shows Up Again



SAIGO GENERAL HOSPITAL
SIIIIGH...

...


SIGH...
...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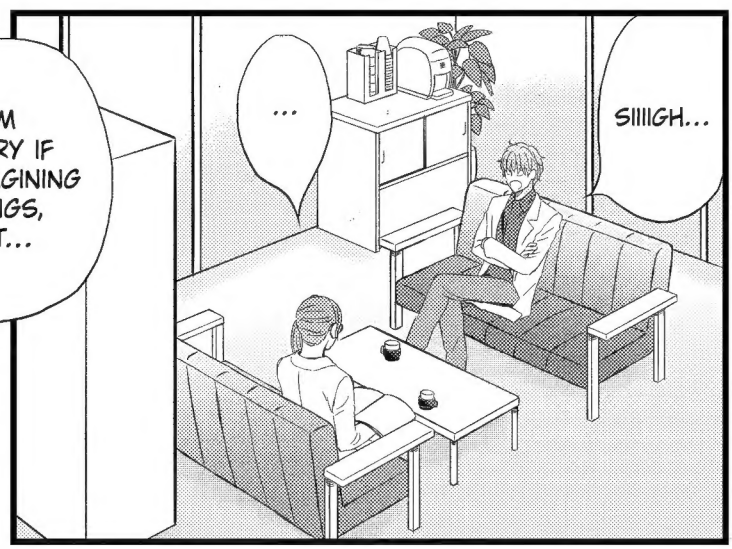
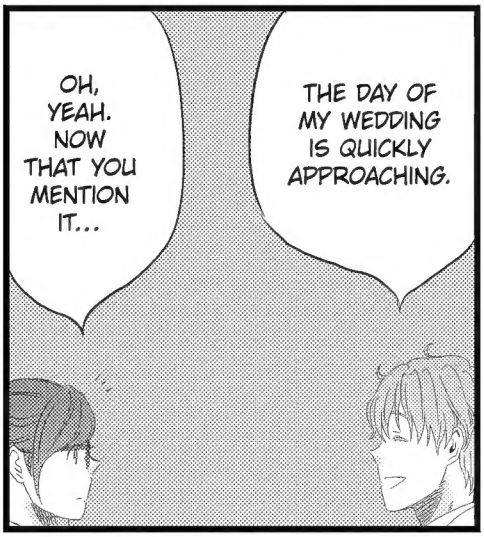
I'M SORRY IF I'M IMAGINING THINGS, BUT...


...
SIIIIGH...

ARE YOU TRYING TO MAKE ME ASK YOU, "IS SOMETHING WRONG?" WITH ALL THAT SIGHING?
?
WELL, YES. I AM, BUT...
YOU DON'T NEED TO CONFIRM IT BEFORE ASKING. NEXT TIME, JUST ASK.
OH, I SEE.


THE DAY OF MY WEDDING IS QUICKLY APPROACHING.
OH, YEAH. NOW THAT YOU MENTION IT...

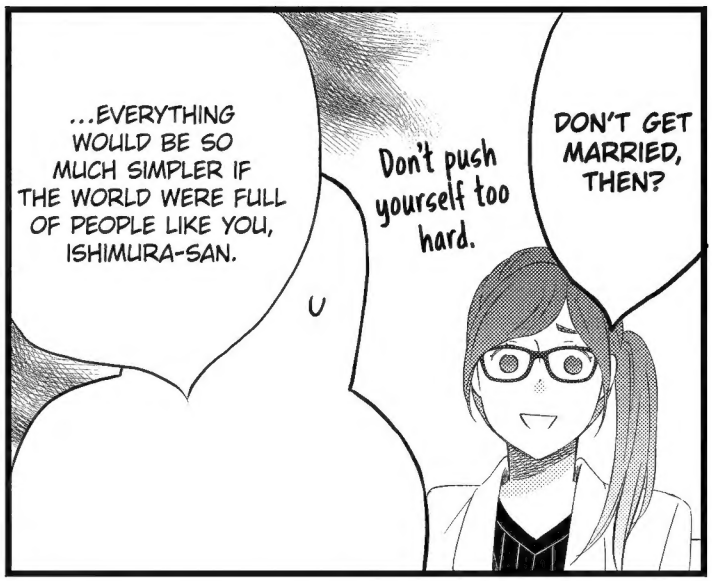
IS SOMETHING WRONG, THEN? ALL THAT SIGHING WAS GETTING ON MY NERVES.
SO BLUNT...!
BUT WELL, THAT'S THE WAY YOU ARE...

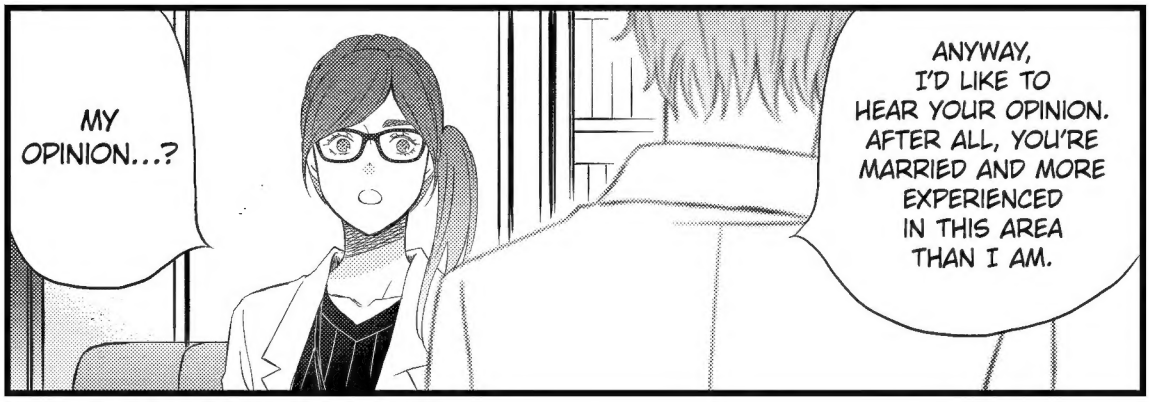
YOU CHOSE A HUGE CEREMONIAL HALL FOR THE EVENT.
SAIGA-SENSEI, YOU MUST ALSO BE PRETTY EXCITED.
...I DIDN'T BRING UP THIS SUBJECT BECAUSE I'M EXCITED.

YOU EVEN INVITED JUN, DIDN'T YOU?
WE'RE ALL LOOKING FORWARD TO IT!

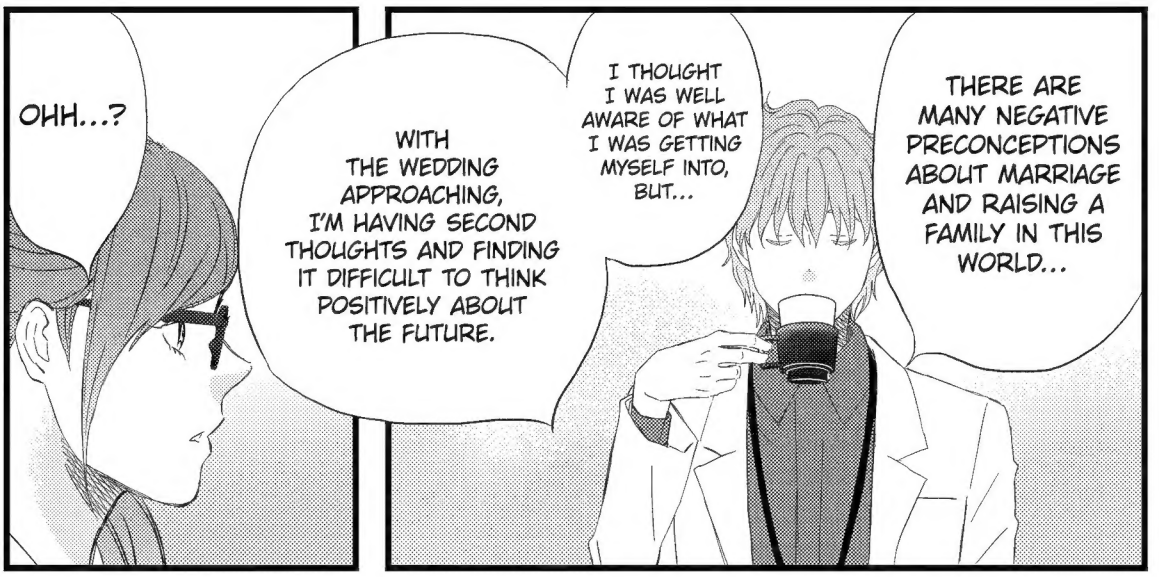
ALL THE ARRANGEMENTS FOR BOTH THE WEDDING CEREMONY AND MY NEW LIFE AFTER MARRIAGE... EVENTUAL CONFLICTS WITH OUR IN-LAWS...
THERE ARE SO MANY THINGS TO CONSIDER AND WORRY ABOUT THAT I'M FEELING A LITTLE OVERWHELMED.
TRUE... IT DOES SOUND QUITE TROUBLESOME.

YOU'RE PROBABLY SUFFERING FROM THAT "PRE-WEDDING JITTERS" THING.
IS THAT REALLY IT, I WONDER...?
...
Must be tough...

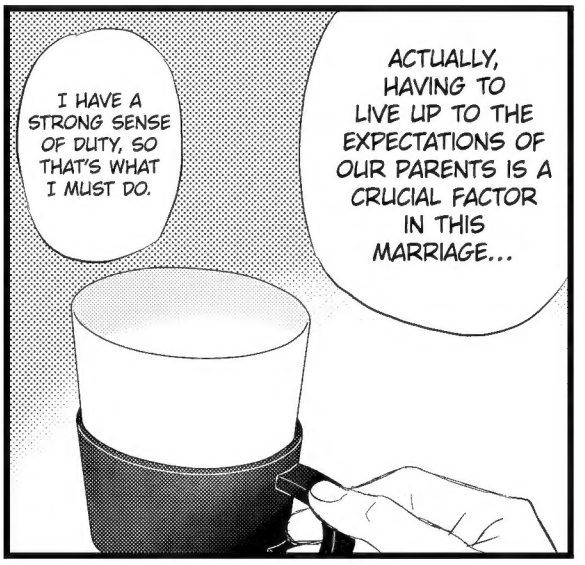

DON'T GET MARRIED, THEN?
Don't push yourself too hard.
...EVERYTHING WOULD BE SO MUCH SIMPLER IF THE WORLD WERE FULL OF PEOPLE LIKE YOU, ISHIMURA-SAN.

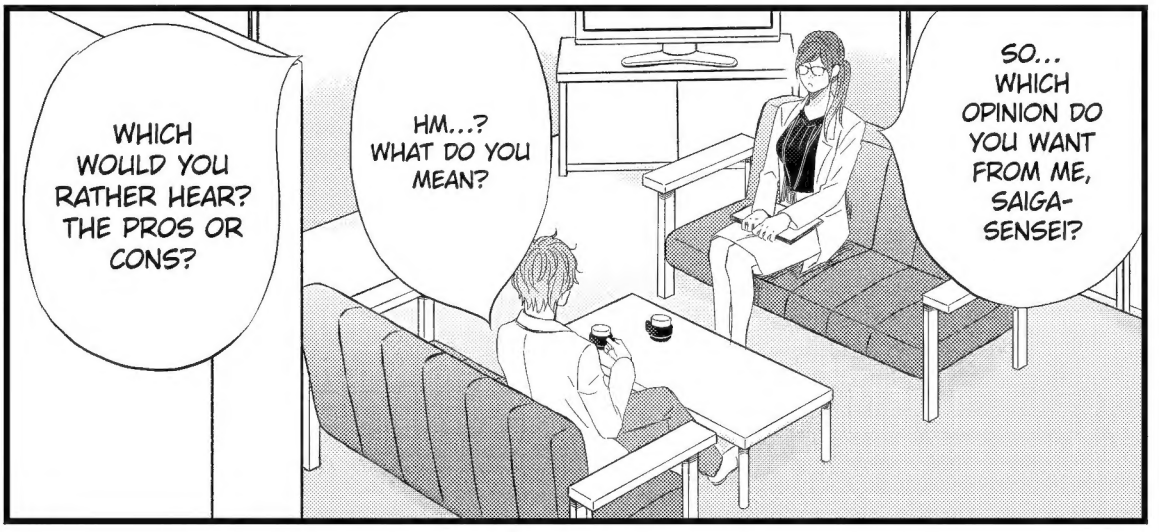

ANYWAY, I'D LIKE TO HEAR YOUR OPINION. AFTER ALL, YOU'RE MARRIED AND MORE EXPERIENCED IN THIS AREA THAN I AM.
MY OPINION...?

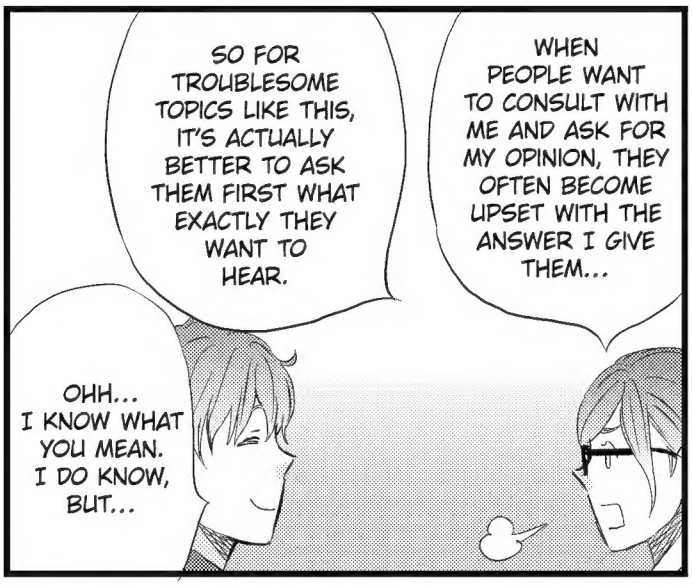
DID MARRIAGE TURN OUT TO BE A GOOD THING?
DID LIVING WITH A CHILD THAT YOU ADOPTED TURN OUT TO BE A GOOD THING?


OHH...?
WITH THE WEDDING APPROACHING, I'M HAVING SECOND THOUGHTS AND FINDING IT DIFFICULT TO THINK POSITIVELY ABOUT THE FUTURE.
I THOUGHT I WAS WELL AWARE OF WHAT I WAS GETTING MYSELF INTO, BUT...
THERE ARE MANY NEGATIVE PRECONCEPTIONS ABOUT MARRIAGE AND RAISING A FAMILY IN THIS WORLD...

I WAS HOPING TO RECEIVE SOME WORDS OF WISDOM FROM YOU, WHOM I GREATLY ADMIRE, TO HELP ME MENTALLY PREPARE FOR MARRIAGE.
THAT'S WHY, ISHIMURA-SENSEI...
I SEE.

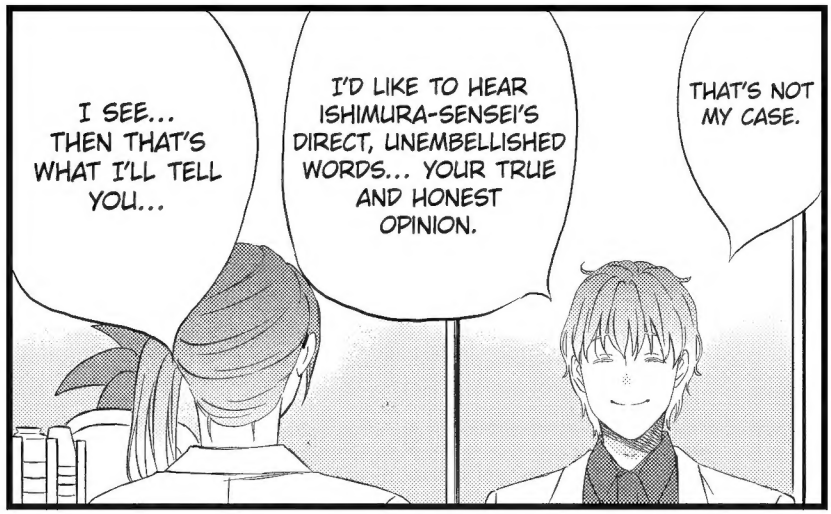

I HAVE A STRONG SENSE OF DUTY, SO THAT'S WHAT I MUST DO.
ACTUALLY, HAVING TO LIVE UP TO THE EXPECTATIONS OF OUR PARENTS IS A CRUCIAL FACTOR IN THIS MARRIAGE...


WHICH WOULD YOU RATHER HEAR? THE PROS OR CONS?
HM...? WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
SO... WHICH OPINION DO YOU WANT FROM ME, SAIGA-SENSEI?

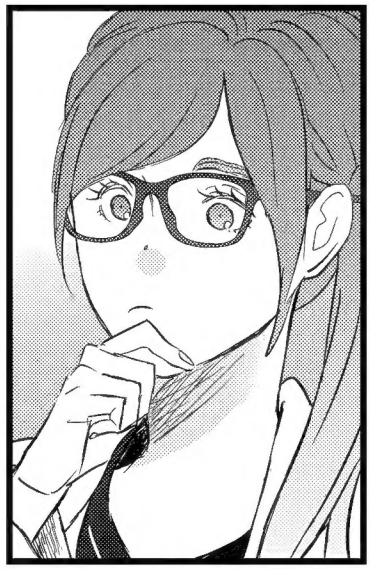

SO FOR TROUBLESOME TOPICS LIKE THIS, IT'S ACTUALLY BETTER TO ASK THEM FIRST WHAT EXACTLY THEY WANT TO HEAR.
WHEN PEOPLE WANT TO CONSULT WITH ME AND ASK FOR MY OPINION, THEY OFTEN BECOME UPSET WITH THE ANSWER I GIVE THEM...
OHH... I KNOW WHAT YOU MEAN. I DO KNOW, BUT...

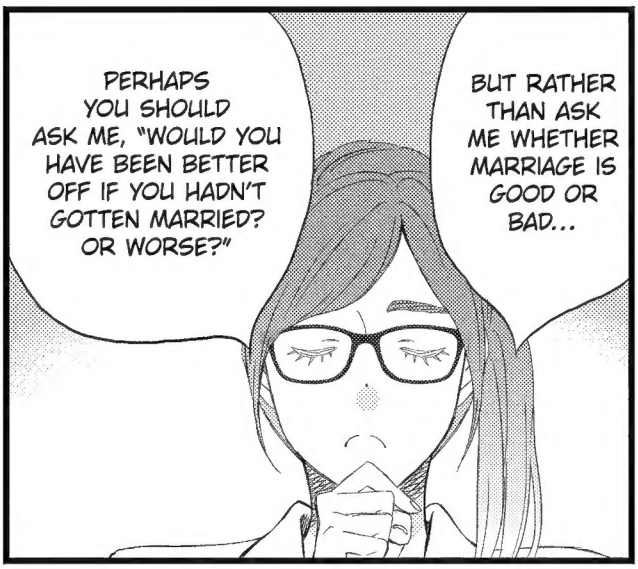
THE QUESTIONER ISN'T LOOKING FOR THE TRUTH IN OTHERS. HE ALREADY KNOWS THE ANSWER, BUT HE SEEKS CONFIRMATION FROM THEM.
WHEN IT COMES TO THESE SORTS OF QUESTIONS ...

"IS MARRIAGE GOOD OR BAD?" WELL...

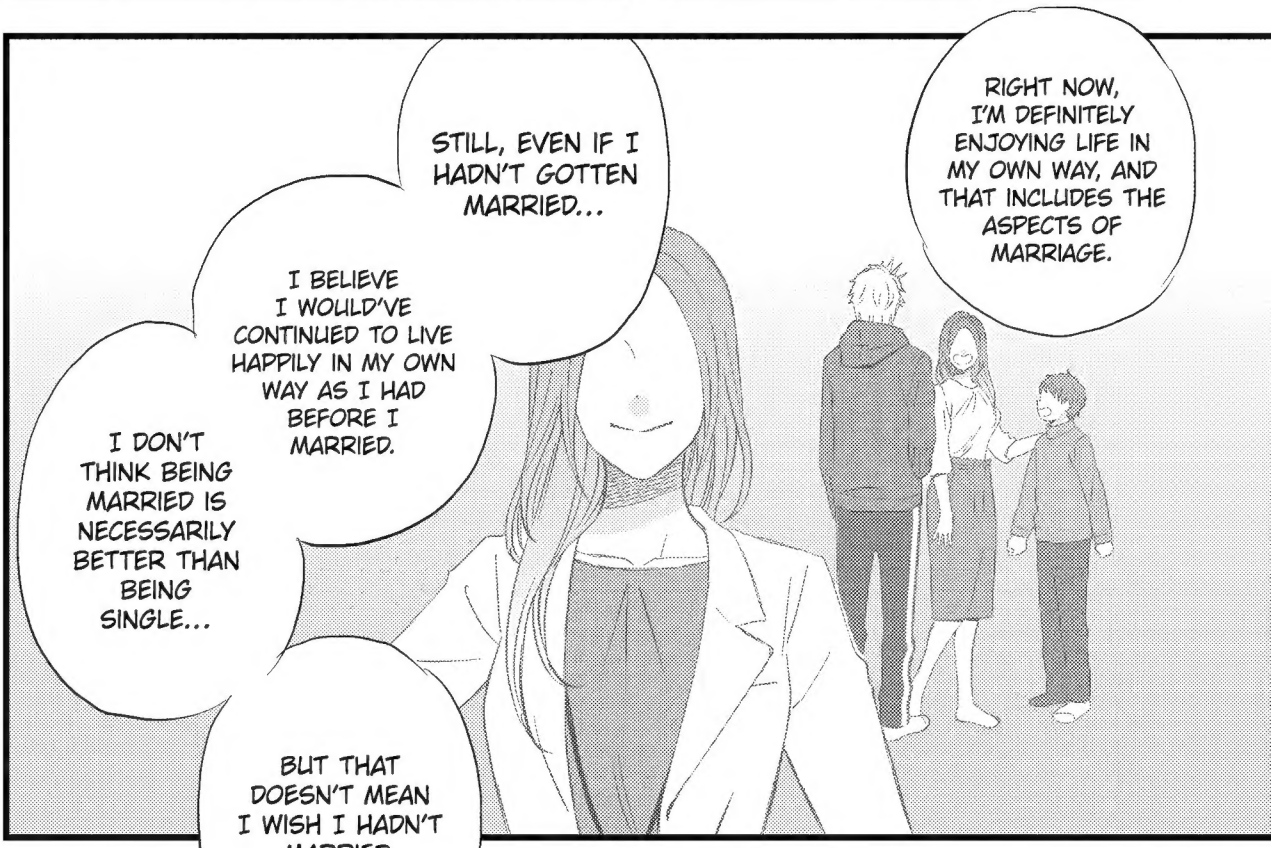

I SEE... THEN THAT'S WHAT I'LL TELL YOU...
I'D LIKE TO HEAR ISHIMURA-SENSEI'S DIRECT, UNEMBELLISHED WORDS... YOUR TRUE AND HONEST OPINION.
THAT'S NOT MY CASE.

I FEEL LIKE... IT'S NOT BAD?

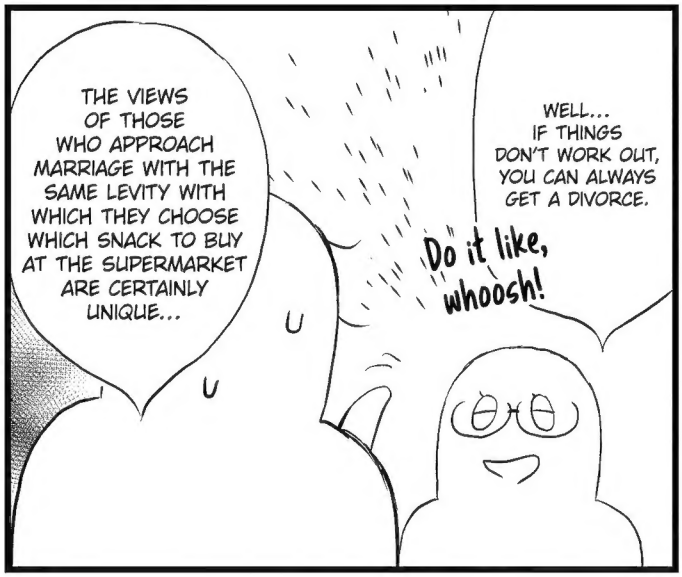


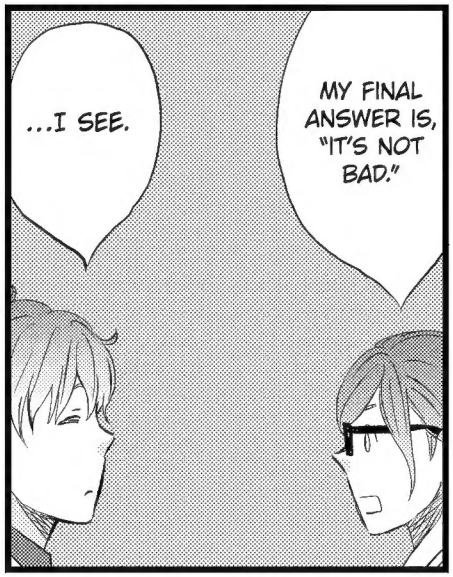

PERHAPS YOU SHOULD ASK ME, "WOULD YOU HAVE BEEN BETTER OFF IF YOU HADN'T GOTTEN MARRIED? OR WORSE?"
BUT RATHER THAN ASK ME WHETHER MARRIAGE IS GOOD OR BAD...

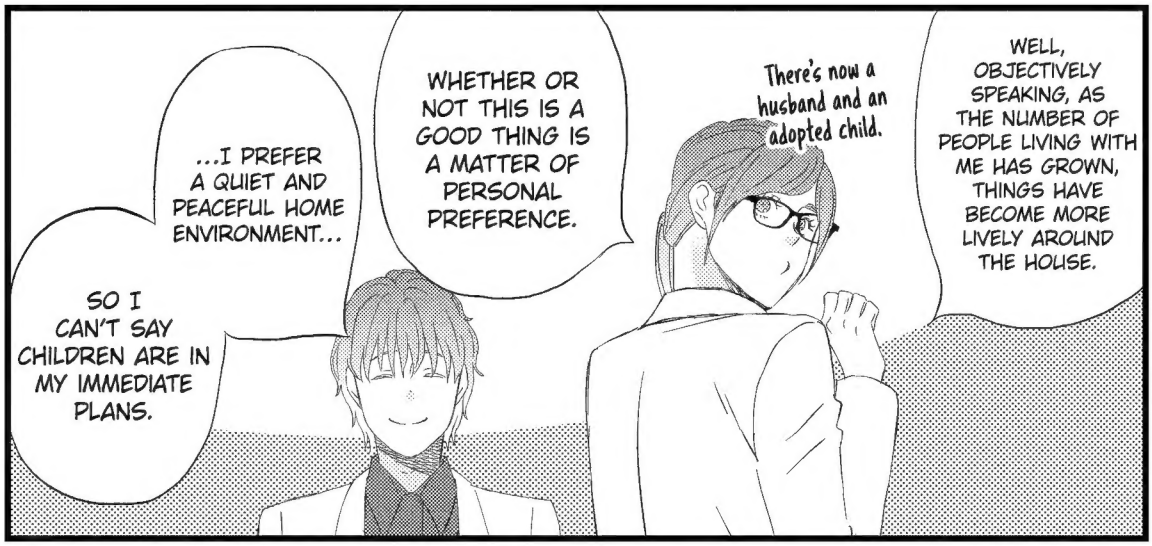
I GUESS YOU'RE RIGHT.
...KNOWING YOU, THAT'S A RATHER AMBIGUOUS RESPONSE.
How unusual.

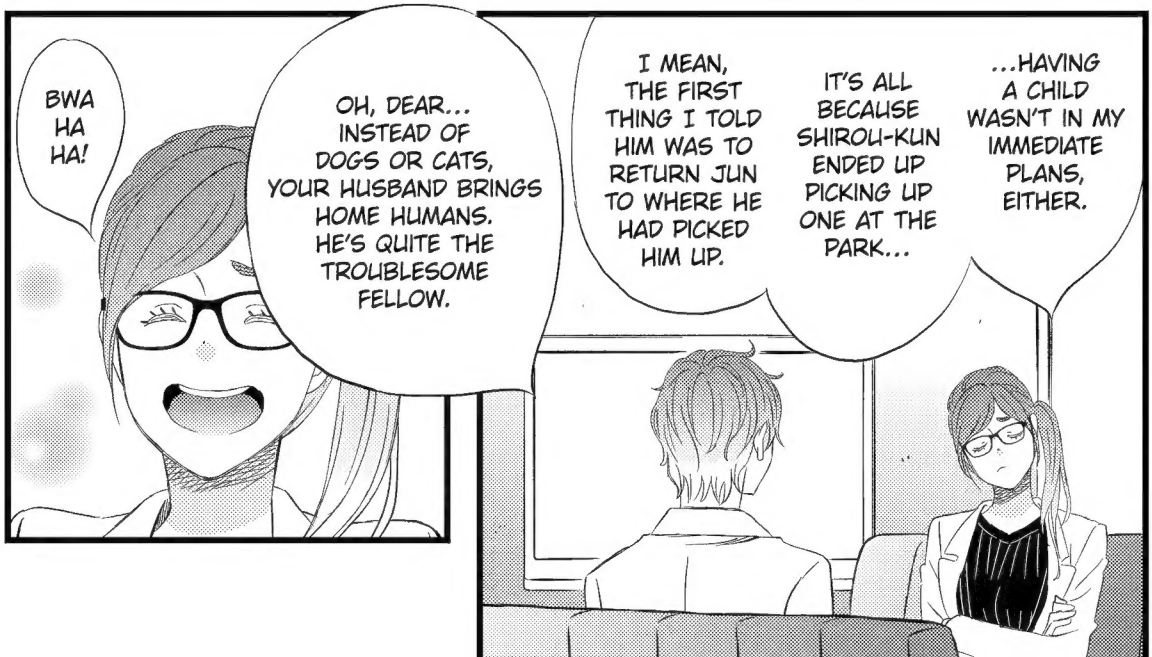

STILL, EVEN IF I HADN'T GOTTEN MARRIED...
RIGHT NOW, I'M DEFINITELY ENJOYING LIFE IN MY OWN WAY, AND THAT INCLUDES THE ASPECTS OF MARRIAGE.
I BELIEVE I WOULD'VE CONTINUED TO LIVE HAPPILY IN MY OWN WAY AS I HAD BEFORE I MARRIED.
I DON'T THINK BEING MARRIED IS NECESSARILY BETTER THAN BEING SINGLE...
BUT THAT DOESN'T MEAN I WISH I HADN'T MARRIED.

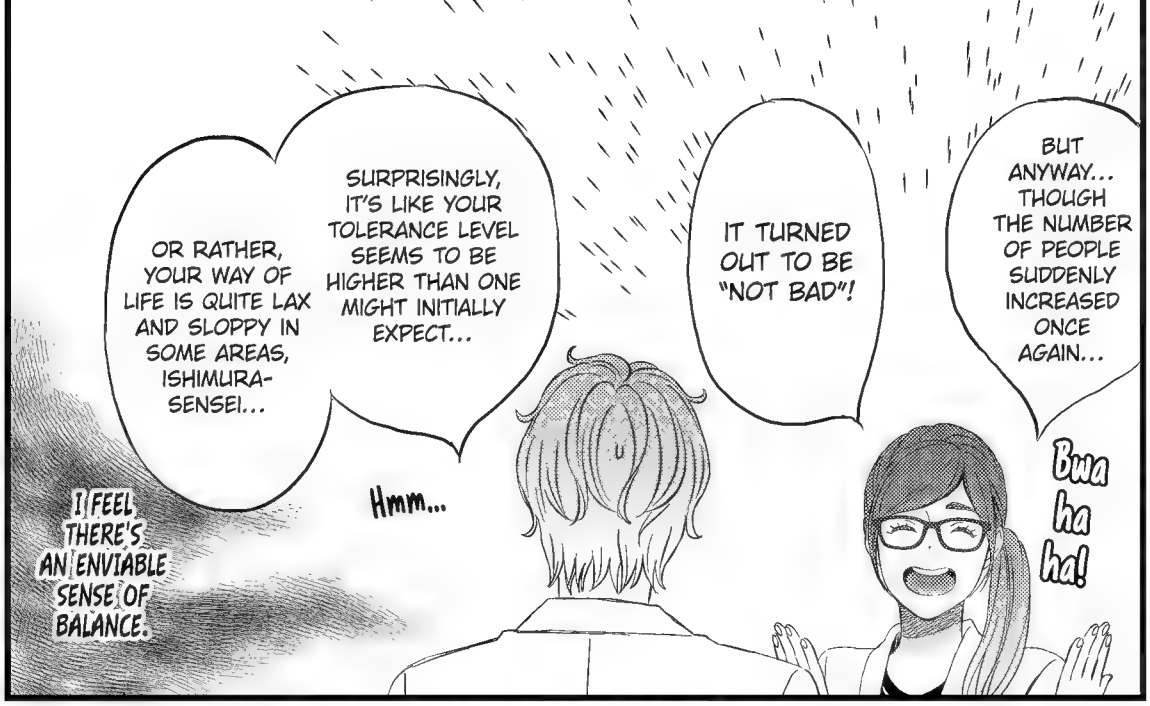
THAT'S WHY...

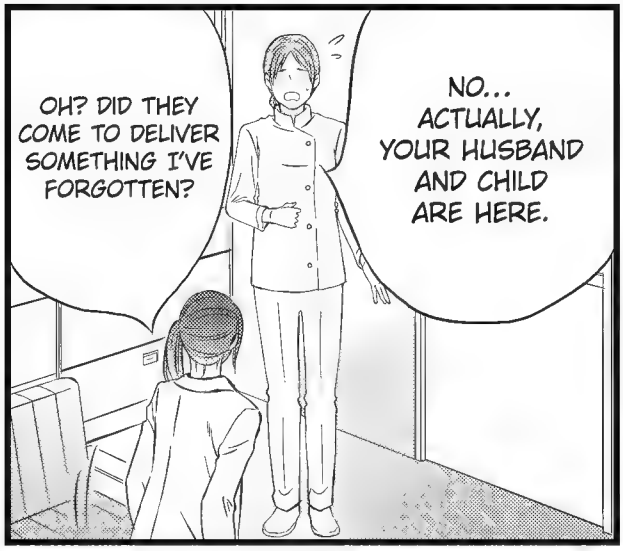

THE VIEWS OF THOSE WHO APPROACH MARRIAGE WITH THE SAME LEVITY WITH WHICH THEY CHOOSE WHICH SNACK TO BUY AT THE SUPERMARKET ARE CERTAINLY UNIQUE...
WELL... IF THINGS DON'T WORK OUT, YOU CAN ALWAYS GET A DIVORCE.
Do it like, whoosh!


...I SEE.
MY FINAL ANSWER IS, "IT'S NOT BAD."


...I PREFER A QUIET AND PEACEFUL HOME ENVIRONMENT...
SO I CAN'T SAY CHILDREN ARE IN MY IMMEDIATE PLANS.
WHETHER OR NOT THIS IS A GOOD THING IS A MATTER OF PERSONAL PREFERENCE.
There's now a husband and an adopted child.
WELL, OBJECTIVELY SPEAKING, AS THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE LIVING WITH ME HAS GROWN, THINGS HAVE BECOME MORE LIVELY AROUND THE HOUSE.


BWA HA HA!
OH, DEAR... INSTEAD OF DOGS OR CATS, YOUR HUSBAND BRINGS HOME HUMANS. HE'S QUITE THE TROUBLESOME FELLOW.
I MEAN, THE FIRST THING I TOLD HIM WAS TO RETURN JUN TO WHERE HE HAD PICKED HIM UP.
IT'S ALL BECAUSE SHIROU-KUN ENDED UP PICKING UP ONE AT THE PARK...
...HAVING A CHILD WASN'T IN MY IMMEDIATE PLANS, EITHER.


I FEEL THERE'S AN ENVIABLE SENSE OF BALANCE.
OR RATHER, YOUR WAY OF LIFE IS QUITE LAX AND SLOPPY IN SOME AREAS, ISHIMURA-SENSEI...
SURPRISINGLY, IT'S LIKE YOUR TOLERANCE LEVEL SEEMS TO BE HIGHER THAN ONE MIGHT INITIALLY EXPECT...
Hmm...
IT TURNED OUT TO BE "NOT BAD"!
BUT ANYWAY... THOUGH THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE SUDDENLY INCREASED ONCE AGAIN...
Bwa ha ha!


OH? DID THEY COME TO DELIVER SOMETHING I'VE FORGOTTEN?
NO... ACTUALLY, YOUR HUSBAND AND CHILD ARE HERE.

IS SOMETHING WRONG WITH A PATIENT?
OH...? WHAT'S GOTTEN YOU INTO A PANIC?
ISHIMURA-SENSEI! I'M SORRY FOR INTERRUPTING YOUR BREAK.

Bwaaaah!
BUT IT'S NOT A FORGOTTEN ITEM...

IT SEEMS THEY CAME TO DELIVER SOMETHING, ALL RIGHT...
WELL...

WHAT SHOULD I DO, WHAT SHOULD I DO, WHAT SHOULD I DO... WHAT SHOULD I DO?!

Bwaah!

Bwaaah!

Bwaah!

IT'S A BABY...

HAA... WHEN I SAW THAT SOMEONE HAD SUDDENLY ABANDONED A BABY ON OUR FRONT DOOR, I HAD A MINI-HEART ATTACK...

OH, NO. IT'S FINE...

I'M SORRY ABOUT THIS. YOU WERE EVEN ON YOUR BREAK...

AFTER ALL, THAT WOULD STILL BE OUR FRONT DOOR.

THIS TIME, I CAN'T TELL SHIROU-KUN TO RETURN THE BABY TO WHERE HE PICKED HIM UP.

THIS IS A BABY, NOT A STRAY CAT.

Hmm...

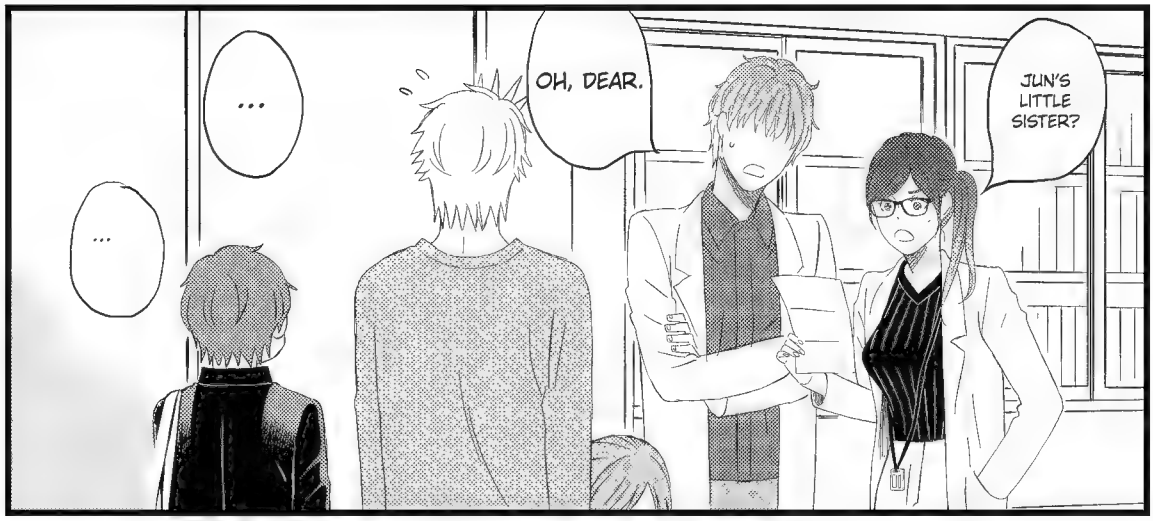
I HAVE CONTACTED THE MATERNITY HOSPITAL LISTED IN THE RECORD BOOK, BUT...

...SO, INSIDE THAT BAG IS A MATERNITY HEALTH RECORD BOOK, DISPOSABLE DIAPERS, AND OTHER RELATED ITEMS, RIGHT...?

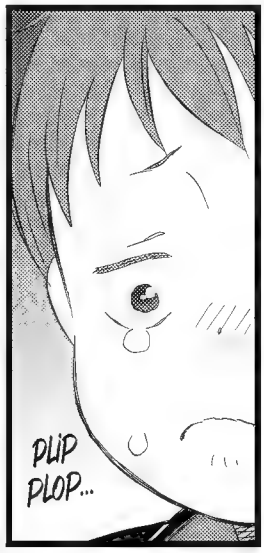
IT SEEMS THAT THE MOTHER'S WHEREABOUTS ARE CURRENTLY UNKNOWN.

This girl is Jun's little sister.
Her name is Miu.

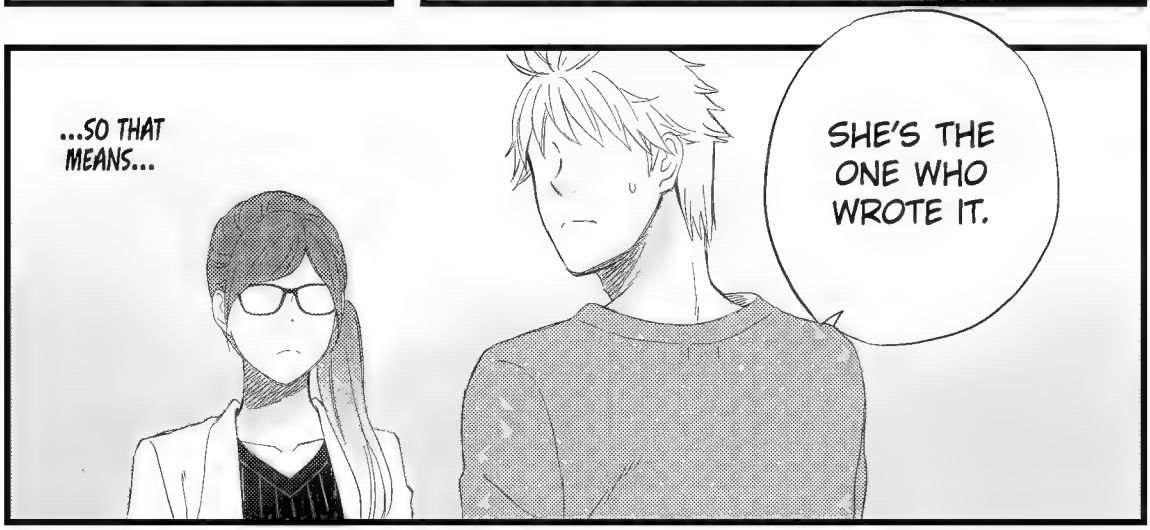
WELL... I THOUGHT I SHOULD'VE DONE THAT, TOO, BUT...
EVEN IF YOUR WIFE WORKS AT A HOSPITAL, THIS ISN'T THE RIGHT PLACE...
ACTUALLY, YOU SHOULD'VE TAKEN THE CHILD TO THE POLICE.
Good grief!

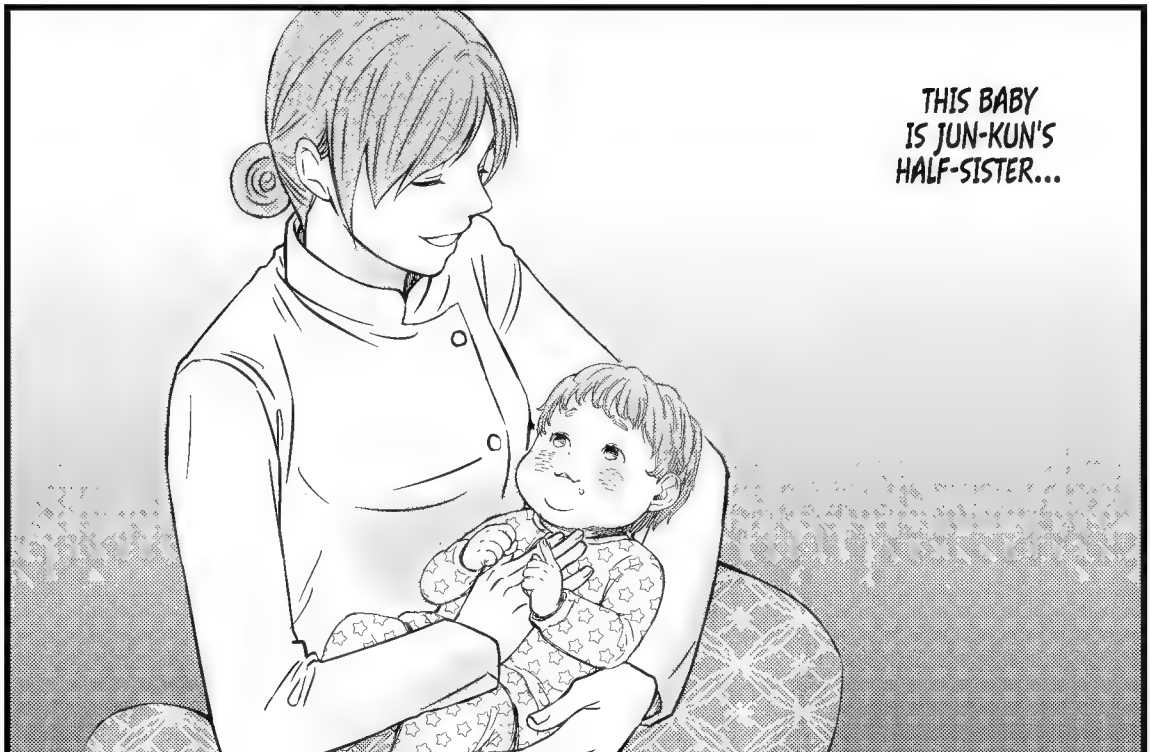

...
...
OH, DEAR.
JUN'S LITTLE SISTER?

THIS NOTE MIGHT BE PART OF SOME ELABORATE SCAM...!
NO, NO, NO! I MEAN... WE SHOULDN'T JUMP TO CONCLUSIONS. WE DON'T KNOW IF SHE'S REALLY YOUR SISTER, DO WE?
THIS ONLY HAPPENED BECAUSE YOU ADOPTED ME...
...I'M SORRY. THIS IS MY FAULT...


PLIP PLOP...

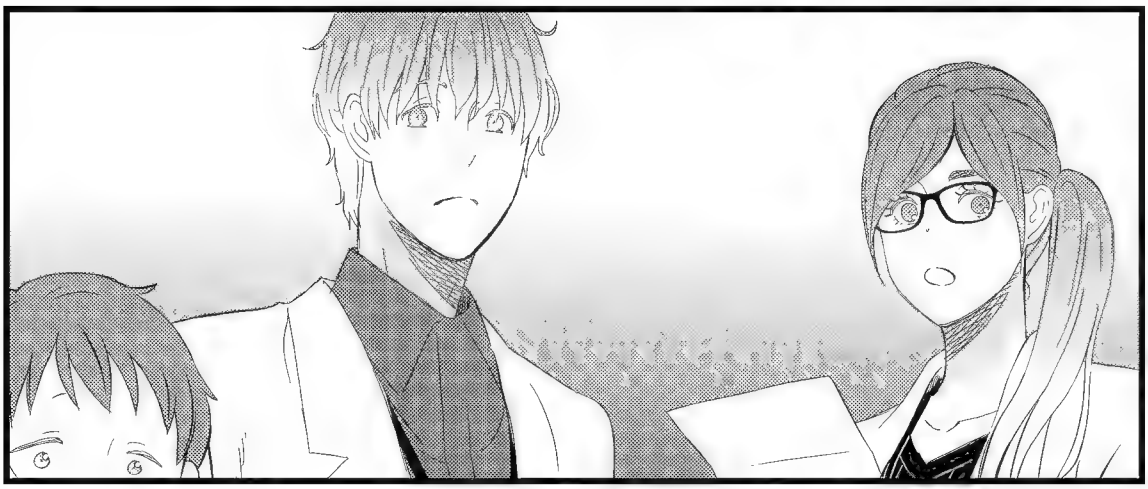
...THAT'S DEFINITELY MY FORMER MOTHER'S WRITING.
SHE LEFT BEHIND A SIMILAR NOTE FOR MY FATHER AND I WHEN SHE ABANDONED US.
I'VE READ IT COUNTLESS TIMES, SO I KNOW...

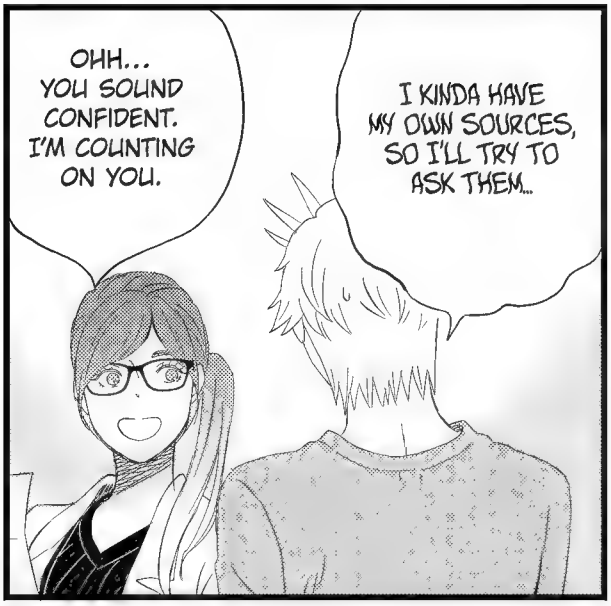

SHE'S THE ONE WHO WROTE IT.
...SO THAT MEANS...


THIS BABY IS JUN-KUN'S HALF-SISTER...

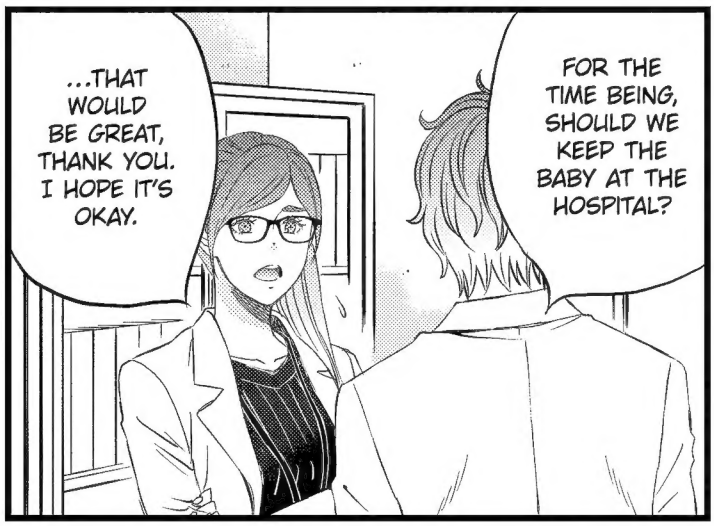
IT'S ENTIRELY ABNORMAL TO ABANDON A BABY OF THIS AGE.
DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA WHY THE BABY WAS LEFT AT OUR FRONT DOOR?
YOU HAVE NOTHING TO APOLOGIZE FOR, JUN. DON'T WORRY.
I'M SORRY...
I DON'T KNOW... I MEAN, WE HAVEN'T SEEN EACH OTHER SINCE SHE LEFT ME.
TO BEGIN WITH, I DON'T EVEN KNOW WHERE SHE LIVES...
IT'D BE GREAT IF SOMEONE KNEW WHERE SHE LIVED AND WE COULD ASK THEM, BUT...
STILL, THIS IS A PROBLEM...
WE WON'T KNOW WHAT'S GOING ON UNLESS WE HEAR IT DIRECTLY FROM YOUR FORMER MOTHER...

OH!



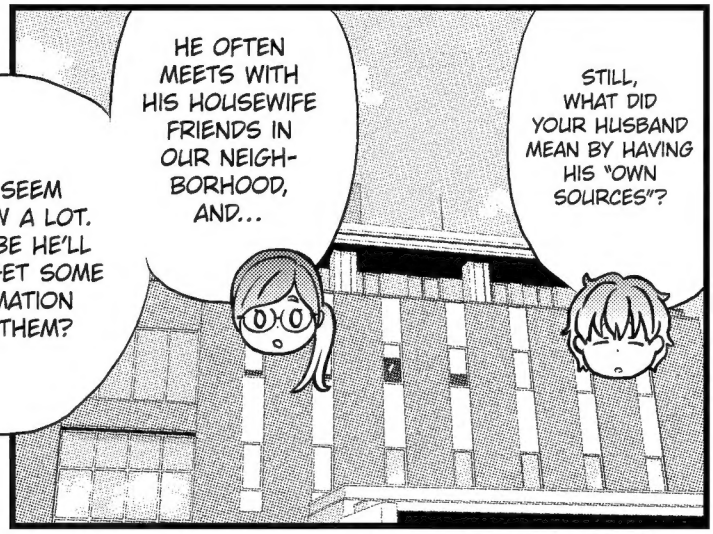

OHH... YOU SOUND CONFIDENT. I'M COUNTING ON YOU.
I KINDA HAVE MY OWN SOURCES, SO I'LL TRY TO ASK THEM...

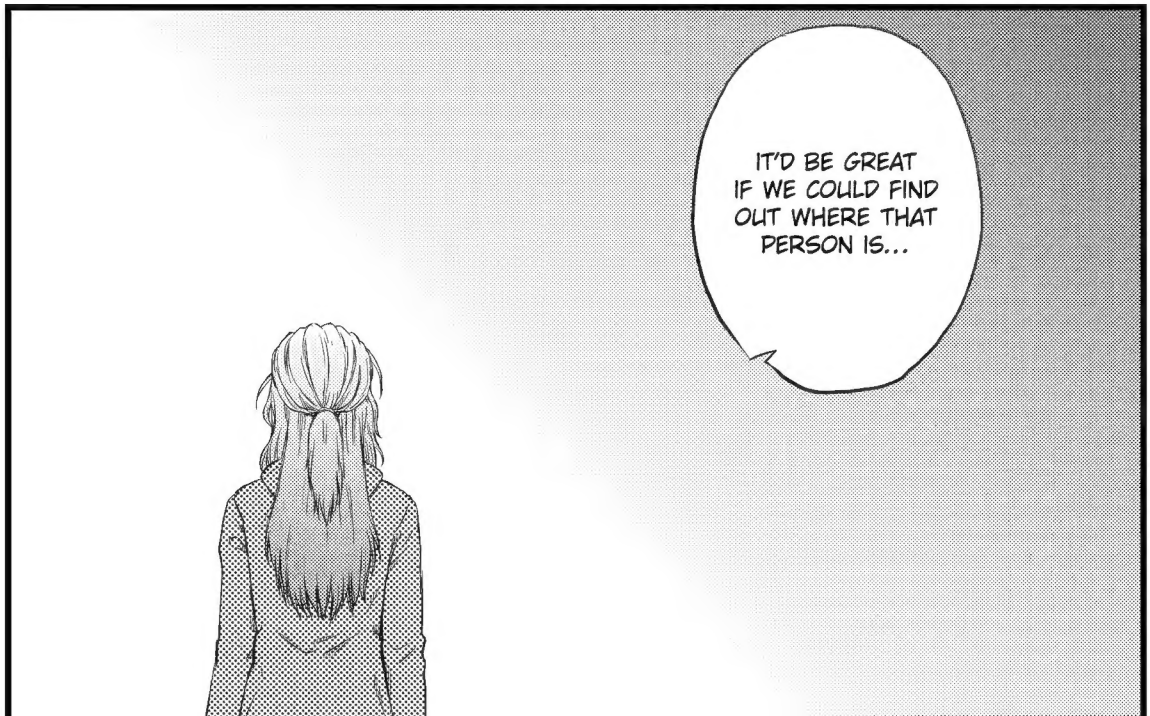
H-HMM... I MIGHT KNOW SOMEONE...
WHAT'S UP, SHIROU-KUN? DO YOU KNOW SOMEONE...?


...THAT WOULD BE GREAT, THANK YOU. I HOPE IT'S OKAY.
FOR THE TIME BEING, SHOULD WE KEEP THE BABY AT THE HOSPITAL?

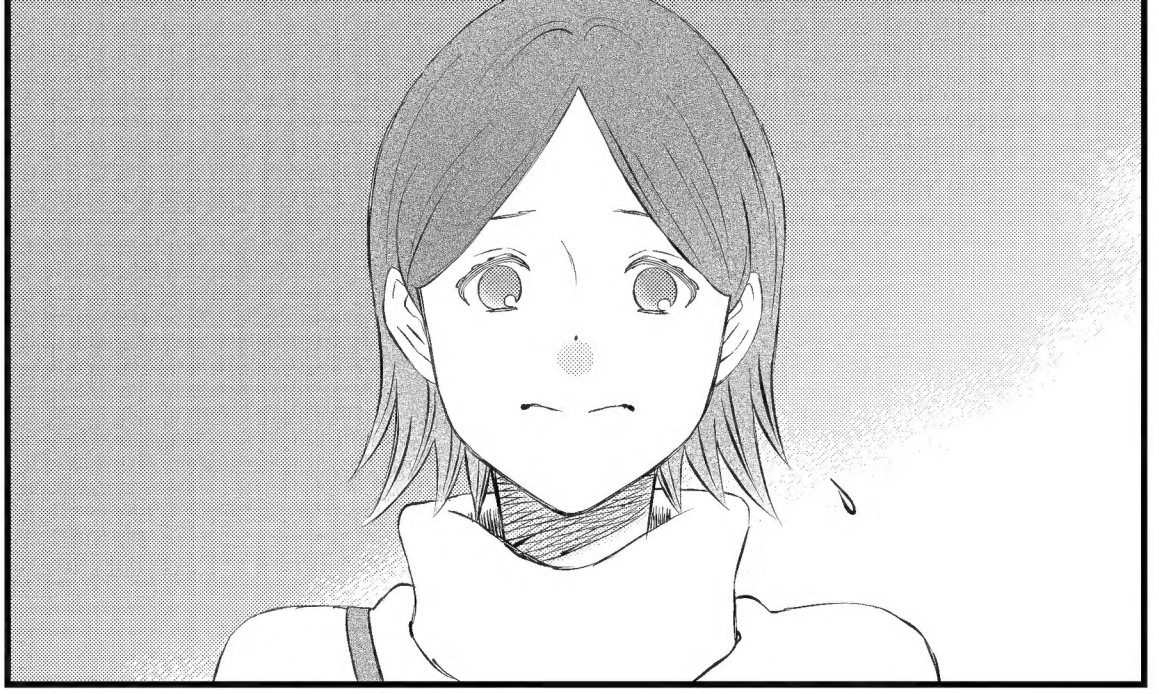
I'm going too!

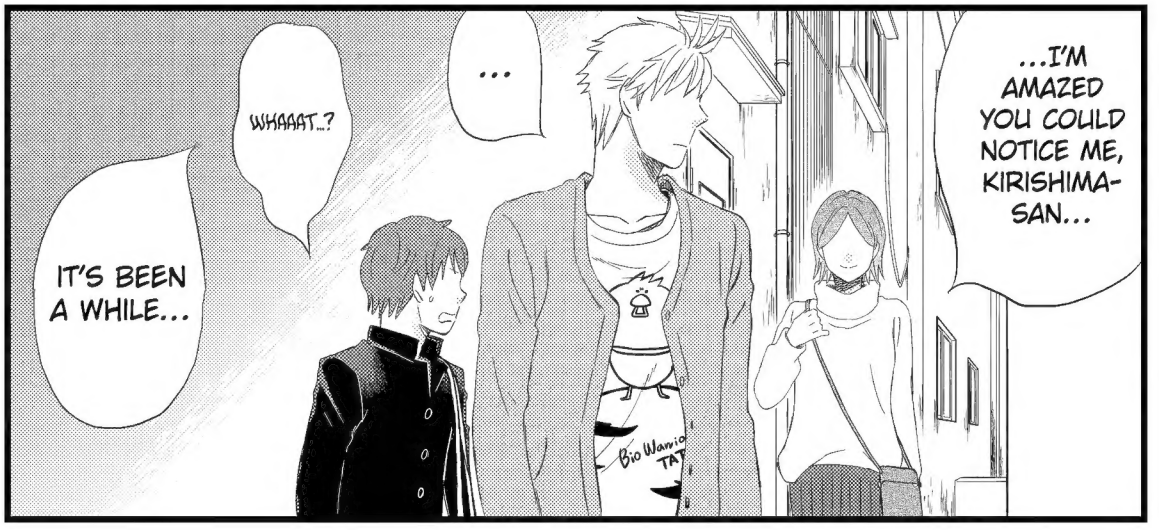
OH, I SEE.

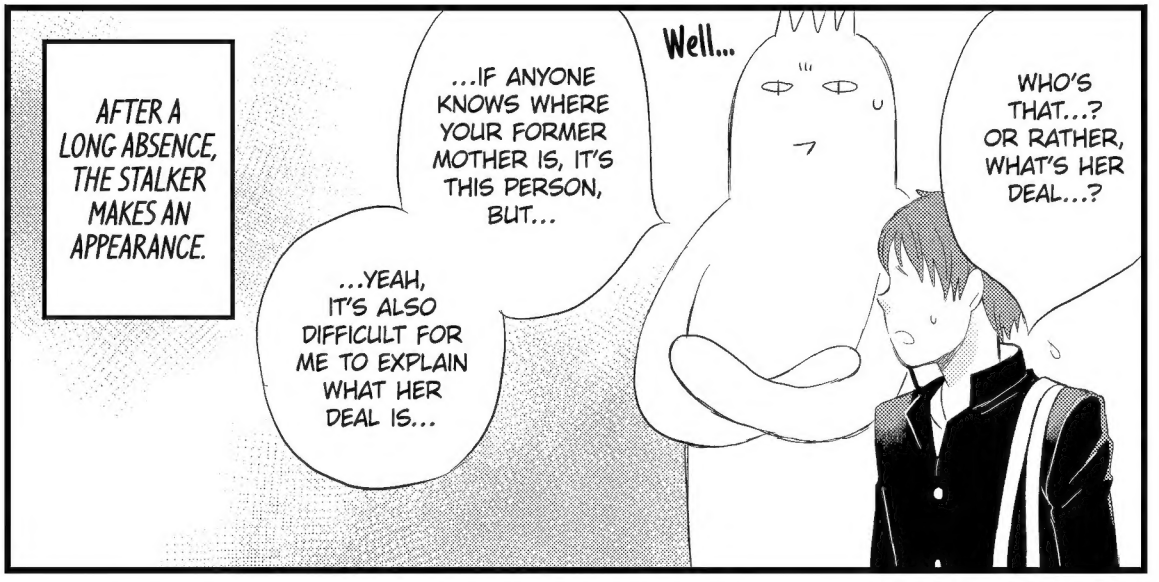

THEY SEEM TO KNOW A LOT. SO MAYBE HE'LL TRY TO GET SOME INFORMATION FROM THEM?
HE OFTEN MEETS WITH HIS HOUSEWIFE FRIENDS IN OUR NEIGHBORHOOD, AND...
STILL, WHAT DID YOUR HUSBAND MEAN BY HAVING HIS "OWN SOURCES"?


IT'D BE GREAT IF WE COULD FIND OUT WHERE THAT PERSON IS...

...HM? ARE YOU MEETING WITH YOUR SOURCE(?) HERE?
YEAH, WELL... ANY LOCATION SHOULD BE FINE, AS LONG AS THERE ARE NO PEOPLE AROUND.
ALL RIGHT... THIS PLACE SHOULD BE GOOD.
WHOA! WHAT THE HECK?!
WHAT'S WRONG, FATHER?! WHY DID YOU SUDDENLY SHOUT...?
...HEY, THERE'S SOMETHING I NEED TO ASK YOU!
Inhale...
STEP...
WHAT ...?
...YOU'RE FOLLOWING US, AREN'T YOU?
SHOW YOURSELF!




...I'M AMAZED YOU COULD NOTICE ME, KIRISHIMA-SAN...
...
WHAAAT...?
IT'S BEEN A WHILE...


AFTER A LONG ABSENCE, THE STALKER MAKES AN APPEARANCE.
...IF ANYONE KNOWS WHERE YOUR FORMER MOTHER IS, IT'S THIS PERSON, BUT...
...YEAH, IT'S ALSO DIFFICULT FOR ME TO EXPLAIN WHAT HER DEAL IS...
Well...
WHO'S THAT...? OR RATHER, WHAT'S HER DEAL...?